



SRO

STATE SCHOOL REFORM/REDESIGN OFFICE
Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget

Unreasonable Hardship Determination Report

Washington Writers' Academy

February 2017

DRAFT

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Framework

State School Reform/Redesign Office Background and Legal Authority

The State School Reform/Redesign Office (SRO) was established in 2010 to serve as Michigan's academic accountability office. The mission of the SRO is to turn Michigan's Priority Schools into the highest-performing schools in Michigan. The SRO's vision is to create the necessary conditions for a globally superior public education system. To do this, the SRO uses both incentives for academic success and consequences for chronic failure. The following state and federal statutes establish the SRO and govern the office's action steps:

Michigan's Revised School Code 380.1280c: Section 1280c of the Revised School Code charges the SRO with the responsibility of identifying and supervising the lowest achieving 5% of schools (Priority Schools). Priority Schools submit reform/redesign plans to improve performance, and the SRO is granted authority to implement intervention if academic progress is not made (i.e. CEO operator for multiple schools, State School Reform/Redesign District (SSRRD), etc.). Priority Schools are required to submit monitoring reports to the SRO in a manner and frequency as determined by the SRO. The statute also provides exemptions for districts under emergency management.

Michigan's Executive Order No. 2015-9: Executive Order 2015-9 transferred the SRO from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB). It also transferred all authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities assigned to MDE and the Superintendent of Public Instruction under MCL 380.1280c to the SRO.

Michigan Public Act 192 (i.e. Enrolled House Bill 5384): The law divides the Detroit Public School District (DPS) into two separate districts and requires the SRO to mandate school closures via specified stipulations.

Under these statutes, the State School Reform/Redesign Office must make notifications and issue orders to Public School Academy Authorizers and/or Traditional Public School Superintendents/Board Presidents establishing different levels of accountability based on the performance of the schools they operate/authorize.

Purpose

On January 20, 2017, the SRO published the order subjecting Washington Writers' Academy to a Next Level of Accountability pending an Unreasonable Hardship Determination as implemented under subsection 1280c. The purpose of this report is to:

- Outline the Unreasonable Hardship Review Process
- Detail the findings of the Unreasonable Hardship Review
- Publish the final Unreasonable Hardship Determination for Washington Writers' Academy, and
- Detail next steps that the SRO recommends in light of the final Unreasonable Hardship Determination.

Unreasonable Hardship Review Process

The SRO must complete an analysis of whether closure of Washington Writers' Academy will result in unreasonable hardship to pupils attending Washington Writers' Academy. The SRO will consider other public school options available to students in the grade levels offered and geographic area served by the public school identified for closure to determine if closing the identified school(s) would result in an unreasonable hardship for the impacted students. The SRO is committed to ensuring that the closure of a failing school does not necessitate the enrollment of a displaced student in another failing school. The SRO's Unreasonable Hardship Review will consist of three parts:

1. **Part 1:** A comprehensive review of all available data related to the past and current performance of the identified school(s)
2. **Part 2:** An academic and an operational on-site review
3. **Part 3:** A detailed examination of other public school options available to students in the grade levels offered and geographic area served by the public school identified for closure.

A set of research-based Turnaround Practices served as the framework for the SRO's Unreasonable Hardship Review. The Turnaround Practices¹ are based on both academic and practice-based research on the common characteristics of successful turnaround schools and are organized into five different domains:

- **Domain 1:** Leadership, Shares Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration
- **Domain 2:** Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction
- **Domain 3:** Providing Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students
- **Domain 4:** School Climate and Culture
- **Domain 5:** District System: Districts develop systems to support, monitor, and sustain turnaround efforts

By structuring the SRO's Unreasonable Hardship Review around these domains the SRO is acknowledging that in determining unreasonable hardship one must not only examine historic performance but must also work intimately with local community members and educators to determine if the academic and operational realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround.

All of the information produced and insights gained from the Unreasonable Hardship Review Process have informed the SRO's Final Unreasonable Hardship Determination, which consists of a series of 3 Key Questions:

- **Question 1:** Are the academic and operational realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround?
- **Question 2:** Are there are sufficient other public school options reasonably available to these pupils?
- **Question 3:** Would the proposed NLA action result in an unreasonable hardship to the displaced pupils?

¹ See Edmonds, 1979; Bryk et al., 2010; Marzano, 2003; Newmann et al., 2001; Lane et al., 2014)

Unreasonable Hardship Review Part 1: Data Review

In an effort to inform the Unreasonable Hardship Determination, the SRO requested a comprehensive set of both academic, cultural, and operational data from Washington Writers' Academy. The data provided can be viewed in Appendix A. In reviewing this data as well as previously state-reported academic data, the SRO has identified the following Key Takeaways related to the past, and current realities of Washington Writers' Academy.

Data Review Key Takeaways

- **Academic (Domains 2 and 3)**
 - Proficiency
 - Between 2014 and 2016 the percentage of students proficient in all four content areas has declined.
 - In the 2015-16 school year, less than █ percentage of African-Americans and only █ of economically disadvantaged students were proficient in mathematics, however 10% of white and Hispanic students were proficient in the same subject.
 - Student Instructional Support Systems (Interventions)
 - Includes a several reading intervention programs (such as Haggerty Phonics, Literacy Interventions, Reading Mastery Classics/Fast Cycle, and System 44).
 - Compass Learning Intervention is used for reading, mathematics, and science, individualized learning paths for each student.
 - Kalamazoo College tutors to help students improve mathematics and reading skills.
 - Curriculum
 - ELA: Using a comprehensive program, however piloting different programs for a possible district change in 2017-18.
 - Writing: Using a good writing curricula for grades K-5. Is missing a pacing guide. Currently using units of study for teaching writing by Lucy Calkins. However, some are piloting several other programs, and discussions are now being held for changing the program for the 2017-18 school year.
 - Mathematics: Using a recognized program through Scott Foresman & Addison Wesley Mathematics. Is currently piloting two mathematic programs. May adopt one of the programs in the fall of 2017-18.
 - Science: Science curricula is adequate. Student investigation and experiments are not clearly identified. Using Reading Street to meet the requirement for informational texts related for science. Pacing guide recently updated in 2014.
 - Social Studies: Using a comprehensive locally created curricula for grades K-5. Using Reading Street to meet the requirement for informational texts related for social studies.

- **Climate and Culture** (Domains 3 and 4)
 - Enrollment
 - Enrollment has increased each year between 2014 and 2016.
 - Between 2014 and 2016, the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students has decreased from 98.1% to 92.8%.
 - Attendance
 - Between 2014 and 2016 the attendance has remained above the state goal of 90%.
 - The average attendance has remained at 92%.
 - Discipline
 - Thoughtful, coherent, wrap around programs, such as Capturing Kids Hearts, Positive Behavior in Literacy Support, Mentors, Trauma Informed Educational Strategies, with onsite counseling provided by Western Michigan University through interns.
- **Professional** (Domains 1 and 5)
 - Teacher Evaluation
 - For 2015-2016, 94% of the teachers were evaluated to be either highly effective or effective. Yet, 85% of the students are not proficient in any of the content subject areas.

Unreasonable Hardship Review Part 2a: Academic On-Site Review

On February 8, 2017 two representatives of the SRO conducted the Academic On-Site Review for Washington Writers' Academy. The purpose of this visit was to gain current and school-specific information related to the current academic realities of Washington Writers' Academy from its building leaders, teachers, parents and community members. The Academic On-Site Review was structured as follows:

- Interviews with Building Leadership
- Building Walk-Through with Classroom Observations
- Teacher Leader Focus Group
- Student Focus Group
- Parent/Community Focus Group

In a letter sent on January 23, 2017, the SRO requested that Washington Writers' Academy nominate both teacher leaders as well as parents and community members to participate in the Academic On-Site Review.

The review was structured around the research-based Turnaround Practices and questions that served to frame both the interviews as well as the focus group discussions. Responses from each conversation were analyzed and evaluated for their alignment with key indicators of best practices for high-gain, rapid turnaround schools. The following pages provide the results from the site visit. Rubric ratings (see below) and corresponding evidence (in bulleted form) is provided for each Turnaround Practice component.

Rubric Descriptors

<u>Strong alignment with best practice</u>	<u>Moderate alignment with best practice</u>	<u>Low alignment with best practice</u>
All indicators are evident and there is strong evidence that key structures and practices are being used effectively to improve instruction.	Some of the indicators are evident and there is some evidence that key structures and practices are being used effectively to improve instruction.	A few or none of the indicators are evident and/or there is little to no evidence that key structures and practices are being used effectively.

A key purpose of the site visit is to assess each school's capacity to engage in accelerated turnaround and to inform decisions regarding unreasonable hardship. As such, site reviewers and the SRO are focused on the following overarching questions.

<p>Domain 1: Leadership, Shares Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have a collaborative environment (e.g., sufficient teaming structures and ways of working together) that can lead to accelerated instructional improvement? • Does the school leadership have systems in place to monitor and support the implementation of improvement strategies, including the use of frequent classroom observations? 	<p>Domain 2: Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school utilize a common core curriculum that is instructionally coherent and that displays a strong understanding of high quality instruction, among teachers and as supported and observed by administrators? • Does school leadership have a system in place to identify teachers that may need additional support, and specific strategies for providing such support?
<p>Domain 3: Providing Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have and actively utilize a system of assessments and interventions capable of providing student-specific supports and subsequent monitoring of the effectiveness of interventions? 	<p>Domain 4: School Climate and Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school provide a safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and professional culture among adults?

Determining Capacity for Successful Turnaround

Key Question 1: What are the core issues and challenges that have kept students at your school from achieving? How are you addressing these issues and challenges?

Key Question 2: What are the key practices and strategies that distinguish your school, and will allow your school to improve, leading to increased student achievement in the near future?

	Alignment with Best Practice
Adaptive Instructional Improvement All stakeholders espouse an “improvement mindset” reflected in the school’s continuous review and assessment of improvement practices and strategies used within the school. Key Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school stops or modifies strategies that are not working and expands those that are working.	
Respectful and Trusting Learning Environment All stakeholders (students, teachers, community members, etc.) have high expectations for students and value working with and learning from each other. Key Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents and students state that they believe that all of the students in the school will succeed (e.g., will do well in classes, graduate, attend and graduate college).• Teachers and administrators work together in formal and informal teams on a regular basis.	
Instructional Rigor Instruction and instructional practices are engaging, differentiated, and sufficiently challenging for all students. Key Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers provide all students with lessons and instruction directly aligned with common core standards and aligned instructional practices.• Written lessons and taught instruction includes stated and written learning objectives, multiple instructional strategies, and challenging (e.g., higher order) tasks, problems, and questioning strategies.	
Targeted Interventions The school expertly uses specific instructional strategies/interventions executed with a high degree of instructional expertise. Key Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student work is consistently improving.• Instructional strategies and interventions are implemented with fidelity.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All focus groups expressed an understanding that the academic outcomes at the school are not where they need to be and have adapted a mindset for improvement.• School leadership, community partners, and teacher groups share high expectations for students are realize they must do more to increase the academic achievement of the students in the school.• No evidence that curriculum was targeted to meet the claims and targets set forth by the MDE.	

Turnaround Strategy Domain 1: Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration

The school has established a community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.

Key Question: How, and to what extent, do you (and your leadership team) cultivate shared ownership, responsibility, and professional collaboration in the school?

Turnaround Strategy Components	Alignment with Best Practice
<p>Teaming, Shared Leadership and Responsibility, and Collaboration</p> <p>Distributed leadership structures and practices are apparent throughout the school building in the form of an active and well-represented Leadership Team and grade-level and vertical teams.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leadership team meets regularly and includes representation from all grades and student needs. • Grade-level and vertical teams meet regularly. • Teams exhibit a strong commitment to high expectations for all students and a willingness to work together to improve instruction. 	
<p>Using Teams, Shared Leadership, and a Collaborative and Trusting Environment to Accelerate Improvement</p> <p>Administrators and teachers (through teacher teams or involvement in the leadership team) are monitoring and assessing the implementation and impact of key improvement strategies, use of resources, classroom instructional practices, and non-academic supports on student achievement.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation: Leadership has the ability to articulate adaptation and innovation – but implementation, based on classroom visits was not clear. When ELA and Mathematic teachers were not aware of the MDE claims and targets used on state assessments. • Instructional Observation: Instruction is formally and informally observed and meaningful feedback is provided. Teachers, as well as students, are held to high expectations. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers meet twice monthly in Professional Learning Communities by grade level. • Teachers meet twice monthly in Instructional Learning Communities by subject level. • Teachers and school leadership meet twice weekly during shared preparation times. • Staff meet on a regular basis to discuss student data outcomes. 	

Turnaround Strategy Domain 2: *Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction*

The school uses an aligned system of common core curricula, assessments, and common instructional practices across the school and content areas, and employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.

Key Question: What are the strategies and practices that you and your colleagues use to improve instruction? Specifically, how do you work to improve teachers' instruction?

Turnaround Strategy Components	Alignment with Best Practice
<p>Common core curriculum and aligned and rigorous instructional practices.</p> <p>Administrators and teachers develop and use vertically and horizontally aligned curricula and instructional strategies that includes common units, lessons, assessments, and instructional strategies and language within and across grades and content areas.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed: Teachers' unit and lesson plans being similarly structured, incorporating best practices that link lesson content with the grade-level standards and standards taught in prior and subsequent grades. Discussed: A common set of instructional strategies, academic language, and other learning tools are recommended in lessons, to enable students to access content. However, the walkthrough demonstrated heavy reliance on worksheets of low rigor/effort, along with teacher directed notes in most of the classes. 	
<p>Defined expectations for high quality instructional practices</p> <p>The school has a clear instructional focus and shared expectations for instructional best practices that address students' instructional needs.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed: Leaders and teachers understanding the instructional focus and how the instructional focus informs (or is evident in) classroom practice. Which was NOT demonstrated in the class walkthroughs. Discussed: Teachers have received training and professional development on the instruction focus and related instructional strategies. However, based on the walkthroughs – implementation was not evidenced. 	
<p>Teacher support and feedback to improve instruction</p> <p>Teachers are actively supported to develop high quality lessons, deliver high quality lessons and instruction and to become experts in using and refining effective instructional strategies.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School discussed how the principal (or administrators or coaches) spend significant time in classrooms, observing teachers' instruction and providing teachers with constructive and useful feedback on instructional practices. Teachers (and teacher team) use a variety of standards-based assessments to assess the effectiveness of instructional strategies and modify instruction accordingly. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct and explicit instructional model has been adopted. School leadership performs frequent classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs. 	

- Reading Street interventions is used throughout the curriculum.
- Online learning is promoted through the COMPASS learning program with is individualize for meeting the students individual learning needs.
- Kalamazoo RESA has provided instructional coaches to assist teachers in classroom instruction.

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Turnaround Strategy Domain 3: Providing Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students

The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs

Key Question: How, and to what extent, does your school provide student-specific supports and interventions to students?

Turnaround Strategy Components	Alignment with Best Practice
<p>Tiered and Targeted Interventions for Students and Monitoring for Effectiveness</p> <p>The school has a system (structures, practices, resources) for providing targeted instructional interventions and supports to all students which also includes close monitoring of the impact of tiered interventions on students' progress.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed: Students are provided with targeted, student-specific instruction and interventions in direct response to their academic areas of need, rather than placing entire groups of students in intervention groups. Discussed: The impact of classroom-based and tiered interventions as being frequently monitored (e.g., regularly, in 2, 4, or 6 week intervals and often by grade-level teams or by school support teams) and then refined in direct response to students' needs. 	
<p>Data Use and Data Informed Targeting of Interventions</p> <p>Administrators and teachers use a variety of ongoing assessments (formative, benchmark, and summative) to frequently and continually assess instructional effectiveness and to identify students' individual academic needs.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed: Using a variety of valid and reliable assessments (standards-based and performance assessments) are used consistently, within and across grades and content area. Discussed: Administrators and teachers are using assessment to identify the specific students needing additional support and the targeted areas of need for each specific student. 	

- The academic interventions are not targeted enough to push academic achievement.
- School leadership, teachers, and community partners are razor sharp focus on the holistic needs of the students, yet have a blurred and inconsistent approach to improve student achievement in the four subject content areas.
- The fact that you have between 85% and 95% of students failing all of the core content areas over the last three years, seems to be less of a priority than the emotional wellness of the students.
- School leadership and teachers review NWEA MAP assessment data and weekly pre and post tests to determine the instructional effectiveness of the instructional blocks and determine what interventions should be provided to students.
- A belief was expressed by various focus groups that the growth and proficiency that is being measured on the district administered assessment has a direct correlation to future student outcomes on the state summative assessment.

- The school utilizes a literacy program that they call Busy Bee (a daily intervention program), where students move to different classrooms based on their math and reading skills.

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Turnaround Strategy Domain 4: School Climate and Culture

The school has established a climate and culture that provides a safe, orderly and respectful environment for students and a collegial, collaborative, and professional culture among teachers that supports the school's focus on increasing student achievement.

Key Question: How does your school attend to students' social-emotional health and establish a safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students?

Turnaround Strategy Components	Alignment with Best Practice
<p>Safety and secure learning environment.</p> <p>The school has established and provides a safe and secure learning environment for students, staff and community members.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student to student interaction and teacher to student interactions are respectful and considerate, as observed during the visit.	
<p>Shared Behavioral Expectations that support student learning</p> <p>Administrators and teachers have and use a clearly established set of behavioral expectations and practices that supports students' learning.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectations of student behavior are written and clearly shared and understood throughout the school building.• Behavioral expectations are reinforced through consistently applied rewards and consequences (consistent among and across teachers and grades).	
<p>Targeted and effective social-emotional supports</p> <p>The school has identified, established, and proactively provides effective social-emotional resources and supports for students in need of such supports and assistance.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has identified a wide array of effective social-emotional responses and supports for students in need of such assistance and support.• Students that may need or benefit from social-emotional supports are identified and receive targeted social-emotional support.• Data on the effectiveness of social-emotional supports is collected and monitored.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has implemented a comprehensive program using Capturing Kid’s Heart and Healing the Inside Child to promote a safe and secure school climate, as observed by the classroom walkthroughs.• A social contract is developed and signed by students in each classroom.• Classrooms utilize Class Dojo, Rest and Relocate, fidget items, and behavioral specialists• School leaders, teachers, and community members serve as student mentors.• Students are encouraged to take stretch and brain breaks if they are feeling stress throughout the school day.• Graduate students from the Western Michigan University to provide counseling for students and their families.	

Turnaround Strategy Domain 5: District System to Support Accelerated Improvement and Turnaround

The district has developed systems for identifying schools that are not performing well, and strategies for monitoring and supporting school leadership and teachers.

Examples of district systems:

- *Strategic placement and assignment of principals and teachers in high need schools, including the use of incentives to get the right leaders and teachers in high need schools.*
- *Provision of additional staffing and resource autonomy to leaders in high need schools*
- *Provision of additional supports (e.g., coaching supports, instructional resources) to high need schools.*

Key Questions:

- How does the district monitor and/or support you in your efforts to improve instruction and raise student achievement?
- To what extent has the district provided you with additional autonomy to make changes to staff (e.g., to hire new teachers and/or quickly remove teachers not supportive of your work), to the school's schedule, and in your use of resources? How much autonomy do you have?

	Alignment with Best Practice
District Capacity - Core Functions The District has established and/or provides schools with base supports necessary for effective teaching and learning (Core curriculum and professional development, assessments, data systems, instructional materials, human capital).	
District capacity - Monitor and support The district has established and communicated a district-wide improvement strategy, including a vision and specific goals for improvement. The improvement strategy includes specific strategies for monitoring and supporting schools (leaders, teachers, and students).	
District Capacity – Conditions and Autonomy The district provides schools with sufficient autonomy and authority to implement turnaround actions, while holding schools accountable for results.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School utilizes a district provided curriculum. • School leader feels that she has autonomy in the areas of budget and classroom personnel. She indicated however, that she could not change the start or end time of school. • District and ISD provide instructional coaches to be utilized in the school. 	

Unreasonable Hardship Review Part 2b: Operational On-Site Review (Facility Conditions Index)

The SRO partnered with DTMB's Facilities & Business Services Administration Office (SFA) to determine a facility conditions index (FCI) for Washington Writers' Academy. The FCI measures maintenance and repair costs against current replacement cost of the building. The lower the number, the less cost effective it is for the district to keep the building open.

All inspections were designed to be non-intrusive and the results were based on observations and assumptions given the factual knowledge provided.

FCI SCORE: 99.8

A copy of DTMB's FCI report is attached to this report as Appendix B.

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Unreasonable Hardship Review Part 3: Access and Availability

Whether statutorily required under MCL 380.391(3), MCL 380.507(6), MCL 380.528(6), or MCL 380.561(6), or optionally adopted under MCL 380.1280c, the SRO is committed to completing an analysis of whether the proposed closure will result in unreasonable hardship to pupils attending Washington Writers' Academy. The SRO will consider other public school options available to students in the grade levels offered and geographic area served by Washington Writers' Academy to determine if the closure would result in an unreasonable hardship for the impacted students. The SRO is committed to ensuring that any closure does not necessitate the enrollment of a displaced student in another failing school. When evaluating the sufficiency of other public school options for affected pupils and unreasonable hardship, the SRO evaluates a variety of factors that can generally be organized into three different categories. These categories include, but are not limited to:

- **Geography:** Are there schools within a reasonable number of miles from the school identified that serve the same grade levels as the identified school?
- **Performance:** Are there schools that were identified during the geographic evaluation that also have an acceptable Top-to-Bottom ranking?
- **Access:** Do the students that would be displaced by the NLA Action have reasonable access to the schools identified during both the geographic and performance evaluations?

The results of the SRO's analysis are included in the below table. The number of schools that meet the parameters defined in the left most two columns is included in column #3 and the estimated capacity of the qualifying schools is included in column #4. The right-most two columns define the # of qualifying schools that would not require students to utilize the schools-of-choice legislation (MCL 388.1705/MCL 388.1705c) to gain access and the estimated capacity of those qualifying schools that would not require utilization of the schools-of-choice legislation.

Distance Parameter (Maximum in miles)	TTB Ranking Parameter (Minimum)	# of Qualifying School-of-Choice Schools	Estimated Capacity of Qualifying School-of-Choice Schools	# of Qualifying Local Access Schools	Estimated Capacity of Qualifying Local Access Schools	Total # of Qualifying Schools that Displaced Students Could Access	Total Estimated Capacity of Qualifying Schools that Displaced Students Could Access
5	25	5	35	9	276	14	311
10	25	9	60	10	306	19	366
15	25	15	75	10	306	25	381
20	25	22	144	11	336	33	480
25	25	32	168	11	336	43	504
30	25	40	213	11	336	52	549

Unreasonable Hardship Data Key Takeaways

- There is not enough estimated capacity at qualifying school-of-choice schools with a Top-to-Bottom ranking of 25 or higher within 30 miles to accommodate the schools estimated enrollment.
- There is not enough estimated capacity at local access schools with a Top-to-Bottom ranking of 25 or higher within 30 miles to accommodate the schools estimated enrollment.
- There is enough estimated capacity at qualifying schools that displaced students could access with a Top-to-Bottom ranking of 25 or higher within 30 miles to accommodate the schools estimated enrollment.
- There is enough estimated capacity at qualifying schools that displaced students could access with a Top-to-Bottom ranking of 25 or higher within 25 miles to accommodate the schools estimated enrollment.

Unreasonable Hardship Review Part 4: Final Determination

The SRO's Final Unreasonable Hardship Determination is based on a comprehensive review of all available data, the results from both operational and academic on-site review visits and an examination the other public school options that are available to the students that would be impacted by the closure of Washington Writers' Academy. All of the information produced and insights gained from the Unreasonable Hardship Review Process that have been detailed in this report, were considered when answering the three key questions that comprise the SRO's Final Unreasonable Hardship Determination.

Question 1: Are the academic and operational and academic realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround?

	The academic and operational realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround.
	The academic but not the operational realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround
	The operational but not the academic realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround
	Neither the academic nor the operational realities of the identified school reflective of a school poised for rapid turnaround

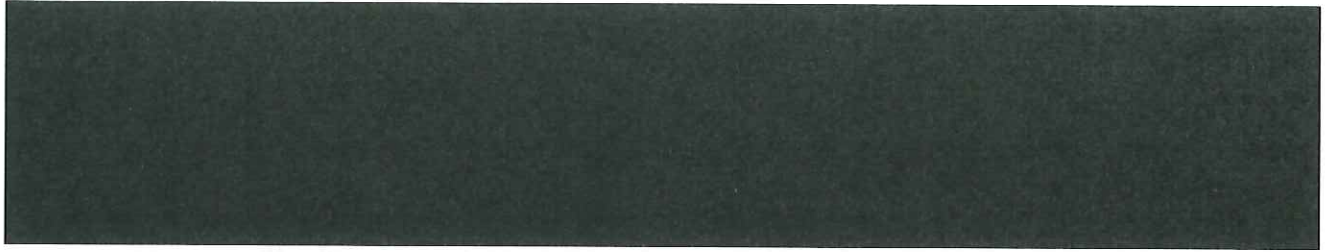
Question 2: Are there are sufficient other public school options reasonably available to these pupils?

	There are sufficient other public school options reasonably available to these pupils?
	There are insufficient other public school options reasonably available to these pupils?

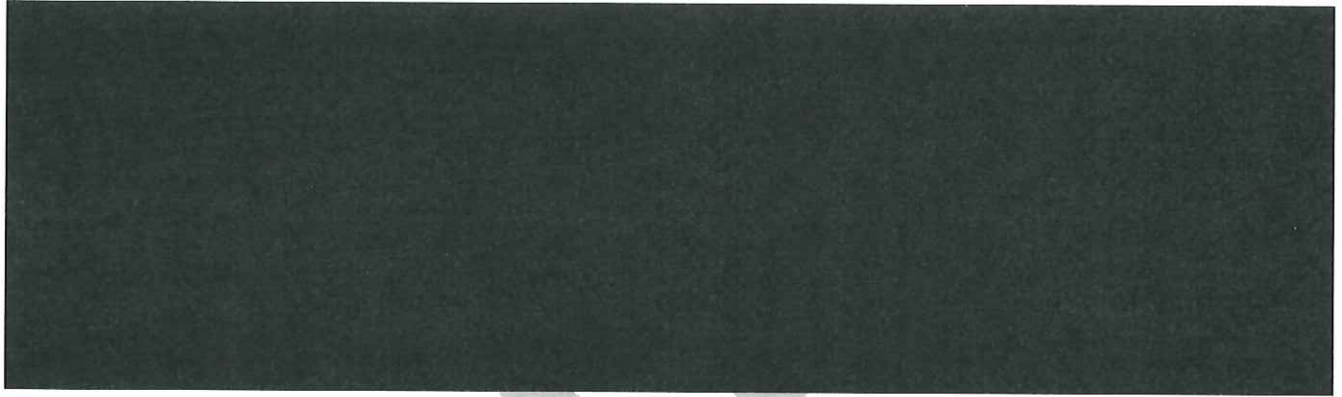
Question 3: Would the proposed NLA action result in an unreasonable hardship to the displaced pupils?

	The proposed NLA action would not result in an unreasonable hardship to the displaced pupils
	The proposed NLA action would result in an unreasonable hardship to the displaced pupils

Determination:



Next Steps:



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APPENDIX A: SRO Unreasonable Hardship Data Request Packet

The SRO is committed to ensuring that the Unreasonable Hardship Determination required under MCL 380.391(3), MCL 380.507(6), MCL 380.528(6), MCL 380.561(6), or optionally adopted under MCL 380.1280c is as informed as possible. Therefore, the SRO is requested that the following information be provided in an editable format (e.g., .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, etc.) by Tuesday, February 1, 2017. Where possible, the information provided will be verified against previously reported and publically available data.

Data review components:

- Academic
- Climate and Culture
- Professional
- Operational

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Academic Data

Top-to-Bottom Rankings by Year

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
6	2	2	4	1

Curricula

- ELA: Please list the ELA Curricula that is being utilized for the current school year (2016-2017)
Reading

Resource: *Pearson Reading Street® (2013) Program (Kindergarten through Grade 5)*

Description: *Reading Street®*, a comprehensive balanced literacy program, includes expanded leveled library collections (with an emphasis on non-fiction) and intervention kits aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Depth and rigor in the foundational skills for reading of literature and informational texts are promoted. The district's reading curriculum includes pacing guides that have been developed by teacher leaders and curriculum writing teams. Grade level and instructional level texts are used in whole and guided reading group, respectively. Multiple genres are studied using research-based strategies.

Writing

Resources: *Units of Study for Teaching Writing®* Lucy Calkins, 2003), updated with Oakland County Consortium Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) Units for Kindergarten through Grade 5 (2013).

Description: *Units of Study for Teaching Writing* (Lucy Calkins), a comprehensive writing program, emphasizes process writing instruction. Teachers present whole group and mini lessons using modeling, as well as interactive, shared, guided, and independent writing.

[Note: The district currently has a team of administrators and teachers exploring the possible recommendation of a new writing resource for 2017-18. Piloting of several programs is currently underway. At the conclusion of the pilot, decisions pertaining to adoption of new resources will be made by spring 2017 with full implementation anticipated in fall 2017, pending Board approval.]

Handwriting

Resource: *Handwriting Without Tears® (2014) for Kindergarten through Grade 5*

Description: Kindergarten through second grade students are taught manuscript. Third grade students are taught cursive handwriting, which is reinforced in fourth and fifth grades.

- Math: Please list the Mathematics Curricula that is being utilized for the current school year (2016-2017)

Scott Foresman & Addison Wesley Mathematics with joint usage of *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* (2008) for Kindergarten through Grade 5

The mathematics curriculum and pacing guides are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The curriculum is designed to develop numerate students who comprehend mathematical concepts and who are procedurally fluent, strategically competent, and adaptive in reasoning and problem solving; and able to use mathematics in a meaningful context.

The Scott Foresman & Addison Wesley Mathematics resources have been supplemented to include Common Core lessons, performance tasks, fluency and number sense routines, complex problem solving lessons, and *Reading Street* informational texts related to mathematics strands under study. Assessments using Smarter Balanced items have been developed.

[Note: The district currently has a team of administrators and teachers exploring the possible recommendation of a new mathematics resource for 2017-18. Several programs were explored and two programs are currently being piloted. At the conclusion of the pilot, decisions pertaining to adoption of new resources will be made by spring 2017 with full implementation anticipated in fall 2017, pending Board approval.]

- Science: Please list the Science Curricula that is being utilized for the current school year (2016-2017)

Battle Creek Mathematics and Science Center Units for Kindergarten through Grade 5, 2008
(Battle Creek Mathematics and Science Center, Battle Creek, Michigan)

Description: The Battle Creek Mathematics and Science Center Curriculum offers an inquiry-based approach to engage students in all four strands of science proficiency (i.e., physical science, life science, earth science, and inquiry and technology). The hands-on curriculum is also designed to facilitate scientific discourse through discussion, writing, and other forms of media.

In 2014, the kindergarten through fifth grade science units and pacing guides were updated by Kalamazoo Public Schools curriculum leaders and writers (teachers and administrators) to include *Reading Street* informational text related to topics under study and updated assessments linked to ELA Common Core State Standards.

- Social Studies: Please list the Social Studies Curricula that is being utilized for the current school year (2016-2017)

Social Studies Alive! (Teacher Curriculum Institute, 2010) for Kindergarten through Grade 2 and Grades 4 and 5. Oakland County Consortium Third Grade MAISA Units (2016).

Description: The social studies resources focus on the study of history, geography, civics, economics, and public discourse and decision-making. Kindergarten through grade 2 focuses on the immediate surroundings of family and school. Third grade students study communities within the state from the beginning of Michigan history to statehood. Fourth grade students study Michigan (from statehood to the present) and regions of the United States. Fifth grade students learn about the history of the United States from its

beginning to the lime period of the 1830s. Nonfiction reading and persuasive and informational writing support instruction.

In 2016, kindergarten through fifth grade social studies units and pacing guides were updated by Kalamazoo Public Schools curriculum leaders and writers (teachers and administrators) to include Reading Street informational text related to topics under study and updated assessments to align with the M-STEP format.

Academic Intervention Systems used:

- Please list all Academic Intervention Systems that are being used currently (2016-2017 school year)
 - Heggerty - Phonemic Awareness: The Skills They Need to Help Them Succeed (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Primary Curriculum) - A program that engages students in phonemic awareness activities within 10 skill groups: letter naming, rhyming, onset fluency, blending, identifying final and/or medial sounds, segmenting, adding phonemes, deleting phonemes, substituting phonemes, and language awareness.
 - Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) - This supplementary literacy instruction program is based on student guided reading levels and is designed to help provide reading and writing instruction (including activities in the Big 5) for the lowest achieving students.
 - World of Words - This program uses engaging non-fiction read alouds in themed text sets to build students' vocabulary, understanding of key concepts related to new words, and comprehension of conceptual big ideas.
 - Reading Mastery Classic/Reading Mastery Fast Cycle - This direct instruction program for struggling readers helps students master decoding and the meaning of print.
 - System 44 - System 44 helps students master the foundational reading skills through explicit instruction in phonics, comprehension, and writing. System 44 gives students access to a range of text types with an emphasis on nonfiction to engage them in learning, build critical thinking, and construct their own learning.
 - Compass Learning (Reading, Math, Science) - This computer-adaptive program identifies current performance levels, diagnoses skill and concept gaps, and draws upon digital learning activities to prescribe individualized learning paths for each student.
 - REWARDS - This intervention program teaches students to use a flexible strategy for decoding long words. It is designed to increase reading fluency, particularly in content-area passages.
 - Comprehension Toolkit: Language and Lessons for Active Literacy - This instructional program teaches comprehension strategies using gradual release of responsibility to model the language of thinking we use when reading and explicitly teaches kids to comprehend non-fiction text.
 - Reading Street My Sidewalks - This accelerated intensive intervention program is paired with Reading Street curriculum with an emphasis on deep meaning of vocabulary and literacy concepts.

Social/Emotional Intervention Systems used:

- Please list all Social/Emotional Intervention Systems that are being used currently (2016-2017 school year)
 - Capturing Kids' Hearts - A school-wide program that creates high-achieving centers of learning by strengthening students' connectedness to others through enhancing healthy bonds with their teachers and establishing collaborative agreements of acceptable behavior.

- Behavior/Success Plans - Individually developed plans to meet the unique social/emotional needs of the student, created with the teacher, student, parent, and support staff who work with the student.
- Positive Behavior and Literacy Support (PBLs) - A school-wide system that defines building-wide expectations and promotes positive behavior by encouraging desired behaviors and high expectations in support of reading.
- Check-In "Time-In"/Check-Outs - Select students meet with a trusted staff member at the beginning of the day/class to start a positive behavior track for the day. Students identify a goal from their self-monitoring sheet to focus on for the day and students check out with the same person to talk about their day.
- Mentors- Students in groups of five are paired with adult mentors to meet weekly to talk about hopes, dreams, careers, goals, and aspirations.
- Trauma Informed Educational Strategies- Teachers work with students to examine "triggers" and "de-escalation" strategies for intervening prior to an incident and teach students to self-regulate according to their sensory needs.
- Safe Place/Safe Face- Students select an adult or area, outside of the classroom, to de-escalate and support re-entry into the learning environment. Western Michigan University On-Site Counseling- Students are eligible to receive on-site counseling services through WMU interns.
- Communities In Schools - Kalamazoo 21st Century after School Program provides academic support for identified students utilizing tools such as Compass Mathematics.

Student Proficiency – Mathematics

Student Group	% Proficient or Above 2013-2014	% Proficient or Above 2014-2015	% Proficient or Above 2015-2016
All Students	14.15	9.84	
Native American			
Asian			
African-American	12.24	7.2	
Hispanic	15.38		10
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			
White	20	26.47	10.71
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	13.33		
Economically Disadvantaged	14.08	8.65	
Students with Disabilities (IEP & 504)	23.33		
English Language Learners			

Student Proficiency – Reading/ELA

Student Group	% Proficient or Above 2013-2014	% Proficient or Above 2014-2015	% Proficient or Above 2015-2016
All Students	31.16	20.31	14.49
Native American			
Asian			
African-American	26.85	15.32	8.46
Hispanic	46.15	23.08	35
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			
White	38.89	32.35	25
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	40	28.57	14.29
Economically Disadvantaged	30.62	19.57	13.64
Students with Disabilities (IEP & 504)	26.67	3.23	9.09
English Language Learners			10

Student Proficiency – Science

Student Group	% Proficient or Above 2013-2014	% Proficient or Above 2014-2015	% Proficient or Above 2015-2016
All Students	10		
Native American			
Asian			
African-American			
Hispanic			
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			
White	16.67		10
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic			
Economically Disadvantaged	10.53		
Students with Disabilities (IEP & 504)			9.09
English Language Learners			

Student Proficiency – Social Studies

Student Group	% Proficient or Above 2013- 2014	% Proficient or Above 2014- 2015	% Proficient or Above 2015- 2016
All Students	1.92	5.36	
Native American			
Asian			
African-American			
Hispanic			
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			
White		23.08	
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic			
Economically Disadvantaged		5.56	
Students with Disabilities (IEP & 504)			
English Language Learners			

Climate and Culture Data

Enrollment by Subgroup²

Race	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
All Students	323	381	433
Male	168	190	215
Female	155	191	218
Native American			
Asian			
African-American	207	240	281
Hispanic	17	30	40
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			
White	61	63	53
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	36	48	56
Economically Disadvantaged	317	369	402
Students with Disabilities (IEP & 504)	42	47	60
English Language Learners			16

Enrollment by Grade

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2013-2014	40	60	62	59	55	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	323
2014-2015	47	58	68	69	75	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	381
2015-2016	66	65	70	78	74	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	433

Special Population Percentages

	2013-2014 (%)	2014-2015 (%)	2015-2016 (%)
English Language Learner			
Students with Disabilities (IEP & 504)	13.0%	12.3%	13.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	98.1%	96.9%	92.8%

Attendance

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Attendance Rate (%)	92.5%	92.4%	91.2%
Percent Chronically Absent	46.2%	47.1%	50.6%
Chronically Absent Student Count	159	173	210

² Enrollment by student(s) does not necessarily indicate that the student(s) will take state assessments.

Professional Data**Teacher Evaluations**

	# of Teachers 2013-2014	% of Teachers 2013-2014	# of Teachers 2014-2015	% of Teachers 2014-2015	# of Teachers 2015-2016	% of Teachers 2015-2016
Highly Effective	0	0.0%	1	3.5%	3	9.4%
Effective	29	100.0%	27	93.1%	27	84.4%
Marginally Effective	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	6.3%
Ineffective	0	0.0%	1	3.5%	0	0.0%

Total Teachers	29	29	32
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